Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4510th meeting

Monday, 8 April 2002, at 3.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Belinga-Eboutou
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Fall
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zínser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Singapore	Ms. Lee
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Wehbe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 6 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/359).

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 6 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/359)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Canada, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. Duval (Canada), Mr. Requeijo Gual (Cuba), Mr. Yépez Lasso (Ecuador), Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Al-Bakri (Malaysia), Mr. Bennouna (Morocco), Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Arias (Spain), Mr. Erwa (Sudan), Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia), Mr. Cengizer (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 8 April 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2002/361 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council to be held today, Monday, 8 April 2002, regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and with previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I should like to inform members of the Council and other participants that we are planning to meet until not later than 7 p.m. If there are speakers remaining on the list, we will resume the meeting tomorrow morning.

The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in the letter dated 6 April 2002 from the representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, which is contained in document S/2002/359.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for responding to the request by the Arab Group to convene this meeting.

Israel, the occupying Power, continues the bloody military offensive against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority that it began on 28 September 2000. Beginning 10 days ago, it has continuously escalated that military campaign by reoccupying the city of Ramallah and destroying and laying siege to the headquarters and office of President Arafat. Israel is using helicopters, tanks and many other kinds of weaponry in its offensive. Furthermore, it is committing war crimes and acts of State terrorism — crimes that one might find very difficult to believe

given that they are taking place in full view of the world and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Suffice it to mention the Israeli brutality committed during attacks against refugee camps in Jenin and Balata and the old city of Nablus. After arbitrary attacks by tanks failed to produce the desired results, scores of missiles and rockets were launched by helicopter gunships against the Jenin refugee camp, an area no more than one square kilometre in size. The purpose and the result in that case were the same: to annihilate the camp and those in it. Equally ferocious and arbitrary practices are being repeated at other sites.

Israeli occupation forces have killed no fewer than 250 Palestinians and have injured scores of others. Counting the victims has become impossible in the last 10 days. Israeli forces have also prevented ambulances and medical teams from reaching the injured. Those blocked have included the International Committee of the Red Cross, staff members of which have been victims of Israel aggression. Israel has also declared many areas closed military zones and has forbidden reporters from entering them. In an effort to keep the world from seeing the new war criminals and to keep it from recalling European cities under Nazi occupation, representatives of the media have been the targets of Israeli aggression.

Israeli forces have also caused the deterioration of the humanitarian situation through their imposition of curfews and by depriving inhabitants of access to basic needs. Water and power have been cut off to vast areas. Infrastructure has been destroyed. Homes have been stormed. Mass detentions have taken place. Buildings, cars and property have been destroyed. In addition, the occupation forces continue their attacks against mosques and churches and continue to lay siege to the Church of the Nativity. Even the birthplace of Christ has not prevented attacks against our people; it will not deter these new war criminals.

The Israeli occupation forces have also committed grave violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949. Accordingly, we once again call for the High Contracting Parties not only to take the necessary measures to guarantee respect for the Convention in accordance with common article 1, but also to assume their duty to take the necessary legal measures to bring to trial those who have committed war crimes. We also call upon the Security Council to consider the mechanism necessary to bring this about. Until that time, we call on the High Contracting Parties — in particular on those who have laws in place regarding extra-territorial jurisdiction over war crimes — to press charges against the war criminals, prosecute them and bring them to justice.

We believe that the list should contain the name of General Shaul Mofaz, the Israeli Army Chief of Staff, who is personally responsible for many war crimes committed by his forces. To that list we would also add the names of many officers and soldiers of Israeli military units and those of helicopter pilots who have committed acts of premeditated murder against civilians on specific instances and on specific dates. We have documented such acts in 110 letters to the Security Council — letters which could be considered a record of such crimes.

Of course, responsibility for such war crimes falls on Mr. Ariel Sharon and his Government. This is an issue that can be dealt with at the appropriate time. We and our future generations will never forget what has befallen us at the hands of the Israeli side. There is no doubt that a serious stand by the international community against these crimes will help to end them and ensure that they are not repeated, not only in Palestine but throughout the world. Such a stand could help heal the painful wounds suffered by our people.

Since 29 March, the overall military attacks and the reoccupation of Palestinian cities have been taking place after the Security Council adopted its important resolution 1397 (2002). The major part of the offensive took place after the adoption of resolution 1402 (2002), and even after the adoption of resolution 1403 (2002), which called for the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay. Once again, Israel, the occupying Power, has chosen to ignore the resolutions of the Security Council. It has done so in clear defiance of the Council and in grave and ominous violation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including Article 25. It is doing so not because of its own strength, but because it relies on the availability of the protection it needs whenever it becomes necessary to resort to Chapter VII of the Charter.

Furthermore, Israel has chosen to ignore the request made by President George Bush four days ago for a cessation of military operations and a withdrawal from recently reoccupied cities. President Bush also asked that withdrawal take place without delay. High officials later clarified that "without delay" meant "now". Israeli tanks wreaked havoc on Palestinian

cities and towns, and military operations are continuing. This arbitrariness must end now. Israel must not be treated as if it were above the law, and the members of the international community must take the necessary measures to put an end to Israeli acts of aggression and to the tragedy and suffering of our people.

The question we must ask now is how our people can trust any initiative. How can they trust the ability and will of those who promoted such initiatives to implement them so that the Palestinian people will not ultimately be compelled to submit to the desires of the Israelis?

We will try not to lose hope, although that will require more serious international action. The Palestinian leadership and President Yasser Arafat will cooperate with those who brought about these initiatives, including, of course, Secretary of State Powell when he visits the region. At the same time, we reiterate our call for an effective international presence on the ground, in particular after the destruction inflicted on the Palestinian police force and other Palestinian security forces, so that upcoming commitments can be implemented and so that we can provide the necessary protection for our people. We should also like to stress the importance of seeking a comprehensive approach to the political situation and to stress the need for the Security Council to participate in taking the necessary measures in that direction.

Our people will not give up in the face of war criminals. We will not give up our right to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with holy Jerusalem as its capital. We will not give up the dream of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. However, the necessary first step is the immediate and unconditional implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). Let us do that together. Let the Security Council adopt an additional resolution reaffirming the Council's serious commitment, and put an end to the tragic humanitarian situation on the ground.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): Just over a week ago, the Security Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002), calling for a meaningful ceasefire, an end to all acts of terrorism and incitement, the withdrawal of Israeli troops and cooperation with American Special Envoy General Anthony Zinni in the implementation of Tenet and Mitchell. Resolution 1402 (2002) lays out a package of reciprocal steps to be carried out by both sides. Even if one does not accept that those steps are intended to be undertaken in sequence, surely one can agree that they should at least be carried out simultaneously. Israeli withdrawal, if it is not preceded by a meaningful Palestinian ceasefire, must, at the very least, be accompanied by one.

Israeli withdrawal under resolution 1402 (2002) is not supposed to occur in a vacuum, and the fact that Israel urges that such a withdrawal be accompanied by a meaningful ceasefire is not a rejection of the resolution, but a call for its faithful implementation. For its part, Israel believes that, with the direct involvement of Secretary of State Powell, the package of steps envisaged in resolution 1402 (2002), including Israel's withdrawal, can be fully implemented. To our dismay, all indicators suggest that the Palestinian side has no intention of even declaring a ceasefire, much less implementing a meaningful one.

On Friday, Special Envoy Zinni met with Chairman Arafat in his Ramallah compound and presented a bridging proposal that the Palestinian leader once again rejected. That rejection, coupled with the Palestinian leadership's steadfast refusal to take any action that might halt attacks on Israeli civilians, demonstrates that the Palestinian leadership has yet to abandon its strategic decision to use terrorism to advance its cause.

In recent weeks, Israeli forces have discovered documentary evidence of what our intelligence services have long known: the Palestinian Authority has played a central role in the support and financing of terrorist operations. Scores of documents and thousands of illegal weapons hidden in the Ramallah compound confirm in striking detail the support provided by Chairman Arafat and other high officials in the Palestinian Authority for terrorist attacks and constitute irrefutable proof of their complicity in the murder of innocent Israeli civilians. Among the items discovered were thousands of rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, mortars, mortar launchers, explosives and hand grenades, all of which the Palestinian Authority is forbidden to possess under signed agreements reached with Israel.

The documents found in Chairman Arafat's compound confirm that the Palestinian Authority financed, with international and donor funds, the

terrorist activities carried out by Fatah Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the group responsible for nine separate terrorist attacks against Israel in the month of March alone. One document attests to the fact that the Palestinian Authority, under Chairman Arafat's signature, provided ongoing funding for the Al-Aqsa Brigades in the Bethlehem region by transferring monthly salaries to the organization's activists and funding for memorial ceremonies, posters and other materials to publicize and glorify the deeds of suicide bombers. An additional letter details an ambitious plan to build a factory for manufacturing heavy weapons. The cost to establish the factory was estimated in the document at $100,000, and operating costs were estimated at $15,000 per month. Those figures included the purchase of machines needed to process the metal required to manufacture weapons such as rockets and mortars.

These findings attest to the importance of Israel's military operations, which are being conducted in such a way as to minimize, as much as possible, any harm to Palestinian civilians. Our concerns in that regard have extended the duration of the operation, but they are both a legal and a moral necessity, and proceed from the recognition that the Palestinians are our neighbours and partners and will remain so. The majority of those killed have been Palestinian fighters who either fired on Israeli troops or were actively engaged in terrorist activity. Israel has never and will never intentionally target civilian areas. We must be careful not to accept unfounded claims to that effect as fact, as is often the case.

This morning, the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, delivered an important statement to the Israeli Parliament again expressing the wishes of all the citizens of Israel to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the conflict with our Palestinian neighbours. Prime Minister Sharon welcomed the fact that such an important Arab leader as Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has, for the first time, acknowledged Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders. He described our willingness to engage in negotiations and our search for a partner for peace and declared his willingness to talk to any responsible leader in the region any time, anywhere and without preconditions.

Before I conclude, I would like to reiterate my Government's urgent concern regarding the situation along Israel's northern border. Since the Council last convened, cross-border violations by the Hizbullah have continued without respite. There has been no movement from the Governments that supports Hizbullah — Lebanon, Syria and Iran — to heed the call of the Secretary-General and the international community or to prevent attacks across the Blue Line. Two days ago, five people were wounded in the village of Ghajar during a heavy missile and mortar bombardment from Lebanon. Among the wounded were three children and an infant. Yesterday, Hizbullah fired mortar shells, anti-tank missiles and rockets at civilian and military targets in northern Israel in one of the heaviest bombardments since Israel withdrew. Since Israel withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000, in full compliance with resolution 425 (1978), the widespread attacks in the Mount Dov region near Mount Hermon and close to Moshav Avivim have been carried out live on Lebanese television. Seven Israeli soldiers have been wounded. In addition, this afternoon the Secretary General of Hizbullah, Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, pledged that attacks against Israeli targets would continue.

These illegal and unprovoked cross-border attacks constitute an urgent threat to regional peace and security and are being carried out by terrorists intent on escalating the Palestinian conflict into a broader regional confrontation. Let it be clear to everyone that the cause of the instability along the northern border is the acts of aggression by Hizbullah, with state support, and that Israeli is doing its utmost, while reserving its rights to respond, to prevent Hizbullah's attempts to broaden the confrontation from succeeding. Despite calls from across the international community, nothing has so far deterred Hizbullah from its course. As the Secretary-General declared in his recent statement before the Council,

> "The Government of Lebanon will be aware that it is responsible for any hostile actions taken from its territory". (*S/PV.4506, Resumption 2, p. 6*)

I appeal to the members of the Council to act immediately to compel the responsible Governments to end their support for Hizbullah and to prevent the widening of the current conflict in the Middle East.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway remains deeply alarmed at the present situation in the Middle East. Norway remains convinced that only the resumption of a political process can bring an end to the occupation and bring a lasting solution and peace to Israelis and

Palestinians. The Security Council has indicated the way forward through its recent resolutions, as well as in resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel must immediately stop its military actions against Palestinian towns and villages and withdraw its forces. Similarly, President Arafat must once again, in Arabic, renounce suicide bombings.

The international community, and indeed this Council, must stand united in their demand that these Security Council resolutions be implemented. Norway gives its full support to the recent United States initiative and the mission of Secretary Powell.

President Arafat's ability to function as the leader of the Palestinian Authority must be restored immediately. There will be no way out of the present dire situation unless this occurs.

Norway is extremely concerned with the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian area. Norway, in its capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of International Assistance to Palestinians and on behalf of the international donor community, sent a letter yesterday to Prime Minister Sharon expressing deep concern about the latest developments and the humanitarian situation in the region. Norway urged Israel to ensure the safety of civilians and allow medical personnel immediate, safe and unhindered access to the sick and wounded in accordance with universally accepted norms of international humanitarian law; to lift the curfew within Palestinian cities and permit the entry of food and medical supplies; to avoid damage to civilian infrastructure and facilitate repairs to water and electrical systems; and to ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the donor community have immediate, safe and unhindered access to and movement within the West Bank and Gaza.

Norway is also deeply concerned with the developments in the border areas between Lebanon, Syria and Israel. The present escalation in that area has the potential to threaten regional peace and security. The latest incursions into Israel must stop. Norway urges all parties concerned to show restraint and to de-escalate the situation immediately.

Mr. Cunningham (United States): Much has happened since we met in this Chamber last Thursday. Last Thursday, President Bush spoke from the Rose Garden to the parties in the Middle East conflict and he dispatched Secretary Powell to the region to work towards the implementation of Security Council resolution 1402 (2002). I spoke with the Secretary before his departure last night, briefed him on our informal discussions of yesterday and conveyed the Council's support for his mission.

The Council has now adopted three constructive and comprehensive resolutions and has said what needs to be said in a clear, unified voice. Resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) form a roadmap and a goal. They are the basis for the Secretary's mission and the efforts of the "quartet", which is due to meet in Madrid on 10 April.

In the region itself, Special Envoy General Zinni met with Chairman Arafat last Friday and with Prime Minister Sharon today. Echoing the Security Council's recent calls, General Zinni focused on the need for an immediate ceasefire, Israeli withdrawal and agreement from the Palestinian Authority on implementation of the Tenet work plan.

Now is the time for leadership on the ground and in the region. We do not need any more resolutions. We need full implementation of the existing ones. Although neither side has demonstrated compliance with resolution 1402 (2002), a high-level diplomatic effort is now under way. President Bush has called for Israeli withdrawal without delay. He spoke directly with Prime Minister Sharon on 6 April to deliver this message. Today, he repeated, once again, that he meant what he said.

He has also called on the Palestinian Authority and leaders in the region to do everything in their power to stop terrorist activities and to stop inciting violence by glorifying terror in State-owned media or by telling suicide bombers that they are martyrs. In the absence of a clear condemnation of terrorism by Arab leaders, Palestinian suicide bombers in Gaza and the West Bank will be convinced that they have a green light to destroy any hope of a return to a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. All who care about the Palestinian people must join in acting against groups like Hizbullah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which oppose a peace process and seek the destruction of Israel.

I must again call the Council's attention to the dangerous situation along the Blue Line. A thorough discussion of non-compliance with United Nations

resolutions would necessarily demand a focus on Hizbullah and its backers. Hizbullah actions can only be understood as a deliberate effort to escalate the situation and widen the conflict just as Secretary of State Powell arrives in the region to promote implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). Daily Hizbullah-initiated attacks are in breach of resolution 1391 (2002) and risk provoking dangerous escalation. Hizbullah's 4 April assault on United Nations peacekeepers also shows their contempt for United Nations institutions, Security Council decisions and Lebanon's own obligations under resolutions 425 (1978) and 426 (1978).

Finally, in the current, extremely dangerous situation, we call on all sides, especially Lebanese and Syrian leaders who have influence over Hizbullah's actions, to exercise maximum restraint and work to prevent a serious escalation that could destabilize the region.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): I wish to associate my delegation fully with the statement to be made later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

My authorities are deeply disturbed at the failure to implement resolution 1402 (2002) and resolution 1403 (2002). They are especially disturbed at Israel's failure to withdraw its troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, in defiance of its obligations under Security Council resolutions.

When resolution 1403 (2002) demanded the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay, the Council did not mean that it should be implemented when Israel declared that its current military operations had ended. It meant that there should be no delay in Israel's turning its tanks around and in withdrawing the troops from the A areas. The demand of the Council, therefore, was not for withdrawal when circumstances permitted, or on any incremental basis. It meant Israeli withdrawal now — now meaning 4 April. Instead, and on the contrary, the Israeli authorities have extended their military operations in Palestinian cities.

By Israel's own count, the current operation has now resulted in more than 200 deaths among Palestinians. Of course, many of these were innocent civilians. There have also been very grave violations of international humanitarian law accompanying Israeli military actions. This is utterly unacceptable.

We have not been told how many of those killed had been engaged in the planning and execution of suicide bombings, who, according to Israel, are the targets of its current military campaign. One thing, however, is certain. The current operation, instead, may well have created many more militants, and will have recruited many more young people for extreme political movements. The task of the Palestinian Authority in exercising control and combating terrorism in the A areas has been made still more difficult through the destruction of still more of its infrastructure. The Israeli actions are, by any standards, in conflict with the vision set out by the Council in resolution 1397 (2002), in the declaration of the Beirut Summit, by President Bush, by the European Union and by many others.

My delegation has said many times in this Chamber that Israel is entitled to take measures to defend itself against the terrorists who engage in suicide bombings. In doing so, however, it is not entitled to violate international humanitarian law. It is also not entitled to suppress the economic and social life of an entire population. It is not entitled to restrict the movement of humanitarian aid or to put people's lives at risk through preventing the movement of ambulances. Recklessly endangering the lives of civilians is criminal and counter-productive.

Irrespective of the outcome of the current Israeli military campaign, the essential problem remains that the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people have been frustrated for far too long. We have said many times in this Chamber that the interests of Israeli security are not served by holding the entire Palestinian people in a state of subjection. They are best served by engaging in a meaningful political process leading to a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

Resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), of course, make demands on both sides. Ireland also calls on the Palestinian Authority, for its part, to respond positively and fully to the call for a ceasefire.

My authorities greatly welcome the impending mission of Secretary of State Powell to the region, and we hope that his efforts, together with those of the "quartet" and others, will achieve a ceasefire and a return to negotiations towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. These efforts, if they are to succeed, must address concerns on all sides. The

mediators must also bear in mind that the Palestinian people have the same right as the Israeli people to live in peace and in dignity. They have the same right as the Israeli people to choose their leaders. Treating them with the necessary respect and dignity also means treating their chosen leaders with respect, dignity and impartiality. Equally, Israel has an absolute right to the necessary security assurances.

My authorities also are seriously concerned at the increase in tension along the Blue Line, and at the violations of it that have taken place. I would recall that the Security Council has endorsed the work of the United Nations in establishing the Blue Line, and has also endorsed the Secretary-General's conclusion that Israel has withdrawn its forces from Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978). This resolution, as well as resolution 1310 (2000), and all other Security Council resolutions, must be respected in all its parts. The unacceptable attack that took place on unarmed United Nations military observers last Thursday and the attacks that led to the injury of several Israeli soldiers and civilians are to be condemned unreservedly.

Making a desert, whether militarily, politically or economically, and calling it peace is hardly wise policy. This is something that should be especially pondered by Israel. Both sides know what must be done for the sake of their peoples. Let this be done without any further delay.

Mr. Aguilar Zínser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council has reiterated the urgent need for the implementation of resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) by adopting resolution 1403 (2002). The Security Council has called upon the parties to move immediately to a ceasefire and for Israeli troops to withdraw from Palestinian cities. The Security Council has met twice with the Permanent Representative of Israel and twice with the Permanent Observer of Palestine, and repeated its call for a ceasefire. On many occasions, in its resolutions and presidential statements, the Council has expressed support for the negotiation efforts of the "quartet". Nevertheless, the situation in the Middle East continues to deteriorate and to be the cause of increasing concern.

In view of this, Mexico expresses its intense concern at the fact that the confrontations in their current form will have very serious consequences for the future. The events of today will serve as a justifications brandished by future terrorists in order to perpetuate violence between Israelis and Palestinians and to persist in the spiral of hatred. Peace and security are truly threatened. That is the perception of all the Members of the United Nations and of world public opinion. It is also what is expressed through the growing number of mass demonstrations in the streets. The United Nations and the Security Council are compelled to heed the legitimate concern of world public opinion, to seek ways of making international law prevail and to bring about compliance with the demand for an immediate ceasefire and the initiation of peace negotiations.

The continuation of the disproportionate use of force; the siege on the civilian population in the Palestinian territories and refugee camps; the use of weapons of great destructive power in densely populated areas; the obstruction of humanitarian and medical assistance; and Israel's siege of the Palestinian Authority: these are all flagrant violations of international humanitarian law. Nothing, no cause or reason, can justify such actions under international law.

This defiance of the appeals of the international community leads Mexico to appeal once again to Israel to put an end to its military operations in the Palestinian territories. We stress that the excessive use of force and the violations of international humanitarian law are unacceptable. Israel will not be able to find the security it seeks, it will not be able to prevent further acts of terrorism against its people and it will not be able to live in peace with its neighbours — all of which are its legitimate rights — if it turns its back on the international community, ignores the Council's resolutions and flagrantly violates international humanitarian law.

The Security Council must be firm in demanding compliance with its resolutions in this connection. In this respect, the United Nations Charter is clear in establishing measures for implementing Council decisions, as well as the measures necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security wherever it is threatened or breached. The Council must not lose sight of its mandate and its powers.

Mexico reiterates once again that it shares the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side, in peace and security. However, it is true that this goal can be achieved only if both sides relinquish aggression and reprisals.

Mexico notes with concern that Palestinian suicide bombing attacks in Israel have now been joined by Hizbullah attacks from southern Lebanon in violation of the Blue Line. These actions threaten to further worsen the situation and spread the conflict through the region, drawing in other areas and other actors.

The Palestinian Authority continues to defy the international community and to fail its people. That is why President Arafat must declare his unequivocal rejection of suicide attacks, including the suicide attacks that have cost dozens of innocent civilian lives in Israel. He must call on Palestinian organizations such as Hamas and others, and their leaders to put an end to these acts. He must address Palestinian citizens and Arab public opinion, declaring that terrorism is absolutely contrary to the interests and the cause of the Palestinian people.

Mexico endorses the Council's call in resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1402 (2002) for the parties to cease all acts of violence, including terrorism, provocation, incitement and destruction. The international community has turned to the United Nations, as the highest legal, political and moral authority, to resolve a conflict that is jeopardizing international security. The Council has already demanded that the parties put an end to the violence. In view of the mistrust between the two parties, the Council must explore action and effective support mechanisms for those who seek peace in the Middle East, so that its clear demands may be met.

In that respect, Mexico firmly supports the activities of the "quartet" and Secretary of State Colin Powell to take constructive steps towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle Peace. We have said that the clearer the mediators' position, the more effective their actions on the conflict will be.

The mediation efforts must be supported by concrete measures from the Council. In that regard, Mexico agrees with the Secretary-General that it is imperative to start thinking about the terms of reference for active participation by a third party that will help bring about the conditions for peace. A mechanism must be created to observe and monitor compliance with Council resolutions.

Today, it is obvious that Israelis and Palestinians cannot arrive at a solution to the conflict by themselves. Neither of them is moving in the direction of understanding and negotiation. Both are both betting on violence. The international community must recognize this harsh reality. The time has come to explore extraordinary measures that, in keeping with the provisions of the Charter and international law, will put an end to the hostilities.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation is grateful to you for convening this meeting of the Council at the request of the Arab Group. Four days ago, the Council, following a meeting in which 58 delegations participated, called upon the parties to comply with resolution 1402 (2002) without delay. That resolution, we have said, is the best road-map toward a final political solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. That solution requires the existence of two States living side by side — the State of Palestine and the State of Israel — within secure, recognized borders. By calling on the parties for an immediate ceasefire, for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and for the cessation of all acts of terrorism and violence, resolution 1402 (2002) creates the conditions for the resumption of negotiations with a view to a final settlement. These negotiations also require the return to calm and tranquillity.

Unfortunately, since our meeting and the urgent appeal made to the States to implement the measures I have just referred to, we must recognize that there has been no visible sign indicating the clear will of the parties to take the royal path towards peace, as outlined by the Council in resolution 1402 (2002). That is why the situation remains extremely disquieting. That is why it is deteriorating daily and why the region seems to be moving inexorably towards what we do not want — an apocalyptic end. People are part of that. The humanitarian crisis is worsening. People are being sacrificed.

Cameroon wishes to restate to the parties that a final solution cannot come from the use of force or terror. The peace which we all desire and to which the people of the region aspire will not be achieved through force. It must be the work of all parties. Cameroon has always said this, and we repeat it today: there will be no peace in the Middle East unless Israelis and Palestinians themselves decide to build that peace, to invent it.

The Council has outlined the path to be followed. It is high time that the parties assume equally their responsibilities by immediately implementing resolution

1402 (2002). That is in their best interests because continuing confrontation, as we have stated, serves no one.

Cameroon places great hope in the outcome of the private meetings that the Council continues to hold with the representatives of Israel and Palestine. Through these meetings, the Council has delineated elements that could bring both sides together to the only acceptable avenue that can serve peace — the implementation of Council resolutions. The implementation of these resolutions alone can help resolve the impasse we find ourselves in today.

We should pay attention to any balanced, constructive proposal in this regard, if its goal is aimed at peace. We expect much from the visit of United States Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region and we expect much from the efforts of the "quartet". We call once again on the parties to cooperate fully and sincerely with these messengers of peace in order to save the lives of innocent civilians and to work steadfastly for the advent of peace in the region.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): Over the past few weeks, despite the international community's appeal, military assaults against the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people have continued to intensify. Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) continue unimplemented and ignored. Israel continues to defy the international community and, instead of withdrawing its forces from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, it has increased and intensified its presence and is setting up its own timetable and conditions for withdrawal. Such defiance constitutes a clear threat to international peace and security. It is appalling and unacceptable, and it should not be tolerated by the Council.

The international community as a whole has denounced Israel's military escalation. The United States National Security Adviser said two days ago that Israel should withdraw and should withdraw now. Any other country that challenged Security Council resolutions in such a manner would have been subjected to all kinds of sanctions. On many occasions the Security Council has insisted on the need for it to be credible, forceful and authoritative enough to ensure the implementation of its resolutions. Israel's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) is an open challenge to this Council and its credibility. The Security Council needs to take whatever further steps are necessary to ensure the implementation of these resolutions.

The escalation of violence, if not immediately stopped, has the potential of making the wedge existing between Israel and Palestine become so wide that the Council's vision of them living in peace and within secure borders would be severely compromised for a very long time. This Council needs to take immediate, concrete action to stop the ongoing violence and Israeli assaults against the Palestinian people.

The current situation on the ground justifies, more than ever, the deployment of impartial international observers in the region. In our view, such deployment represents the only hope to get out of this impasse, to put an end to the cycle of violence and to consolidate eventually confidence-building measures between the two sides. The non-aligned members of the Security Council have on various occasions over the past 18 months made concrete proposals for the deployment of such an international presence. Had the Security Council positively considered these proposals, the Middle East region would not be in as explosive a situation as it is today.

We support all the efforts that the facilitators, including the "quartet" and the United States envoys, are making to find a solution.

We understand that United States Secretary of State Powell has travelled to the region in an attempt to break the deadlock and to secure an Israeli withdrawal and a ceasefire. He has the full support of our delegation and of the Council, as well as that of the entire international community. But we must also understand that, as the Secretary-General himself has said, Secretary of State Powell has no magic wand. Hence, it is imperative for the Security Council to favourably consider the deployment of international observers before we reach the point of no return.

The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is extremely precarious. The constant violation of international humanitarian law has almost become the norm on the ground. How can we conceive of any country acting so irresponsibly, disregarding all the calls made by the international community for full respect of the basic rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories? Israel claims that its military assaults are aimed at rooting out terrorist networks and at the elements of Hamas and the Hizbullah terrorists who have killed innocent Israeli

citizens. But over the past 18 months of hostilities, more than 400 of the 1,300 Palestinians killed by Israel have been children and women. One wonders, therefore, which side is involved in terror. If this is not terror, it closely resembles terror. We believe that Israel should stop those senseless acts.

The Commission on Human Rights last Friday adopted a resolution calling upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mrs. Mary Robinson, to undertake a fact-finding mission to the occupied Palestinian territories and to report to the Commission at its current session. We are very pleased that Mrs. Robinson has agreed to lead such a mission as soon as is practicable. We urge Israel to fully cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to facilitate such a mission. The international community has the right to be fully informed about the human rights situation in the territories.

Finally, we would like to reiterate what we have said on many occasions in the Council: Chairman Arafat remains the only valid interlocutor that Israel has to make peace with. Any attempt to sideline or marginalize him would not be acceptable.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria) (*spoke in French*): As a country associated with the European Union, Bulgaria supports the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned about the continuing crisis in the Middle East. We readily associate ourselves with the repeated appeals made in recent days by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to Israel to withdraw immediately from the occupied territories. At the same time, we believe that it is crucial for President Arafat to call on his people to halt the suicide attacks and to prove that he is in control of his troops by preventing renewed acts of violence.

Bulgaria warmly welcomed the statement made last Thursday by the President of the United States, George W. Bush. We welcome his decision to send Secretary of State Colin Powell to the region, and we unequivocally support, and have high hopes for the efforts of the Special Envoy, General Zinni, on the ground. We appeal to the parties to the conflict to take the steps that he suggested to put an end to this tragic situation. When I describe the situation as tragic, I am thinking primarily of the humanitarian situation. In this regard, I would like to echo the analysis of this serious question made earlier by the representative of Norway, Ambassador Kolby. I have nothing to add to what he said. A humanitarian crisis is looming; the Israeli authorities in particular must take that into account and prevent such a crisis.

Bulgaria does not believe that destroying the very infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority will help to resolve the current problems, particularly the problem of violence. On the contrary, it will exacerbate them, since all moderate forces in the Palestinian camp will be weakened, as will those in the entire Arab world.

We believe that the continued isolation of President Arafat is destabilizing. We call upon Israel to guarantee unlimited access by the international community to President Arafat. In this context, we note with indignation that the Foreign Minister of Spain, Mr. Josep Piqué, and the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana, have been prevented from meeting with President Arafat.

Another element in the region with which Bulgaria is concerned is the tension along the Blue Line. Hizbullah's violations of the ceasefire and the provisions of resolution 425 (1978) could further destabilize the situation in the region. We protest and condemn any attempt to violate the physical integrity and security of United Nations staff or of Israeli civilians. Clearly, if such tensions continue they could worsen the situation in the occupied territories and delay the withdrawal of Israeli troops from those territories.

Before concluding, I would like to make two important points. The first relates to the need to ensure unlimited access by journalists covering events in the region — that appeal is addressed to the Israeli authorities. Another point of concern to us is the security of sites associated with all of the major religions in the region. Not only are such sites of religious significance for believers throughout the world, but they have cultural and historical importance.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate the position of Bulgaria. Bulgaria believes that whatever happens the unity of the Council must be maintained. Resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) can be implemented only if there is unity in the Council. Any future action — and we think that action is not necessary in the next few days — has to be

accompanied by unity of action in the Council over and beyond any nuances and differences in approach that we might have.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I now call on the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I would like to start by thanking you for convening this urgent meeting of the Security Council at the request of the Arab Group.

For the third time in just a few days, we meet to try to confront the attempts by Israel to erode the authority and credibility of this Council.

Members of the Council, with no exception, know that Israel has refused to commit to the provisions of the Council's resolutions. These resolutions clearly call upon Israel to withdraw immediately from Palestinian towns and territories. They also call upon Israel to respect the international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

If we take a quick look at the responses provided by the occupying Power, we find an immediate, clear and unequivocal rejection of the Council's resolutions. We find that flimsy pretexts are being advanced. Such pretexts are not acceptable. The Israeli Premier astounded us this morning with yet more expressions of disdain and direct contempt for this Council.

I shall not repeat the statement made by the representative of Palestine a while ago. He explained in detail the distress of the Palestinian people and their suffering.

In the light of the gravity of the situation and of the Palestinian blood being spilled in the streets of the Jenin refugee camp and in the city of Nablus, among others, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a statement made at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing this morning in Madrid, said:

> "The whole world is demanding that Israel withdraws — I don't think the whole world, including the friends of the Israeli people and Government, can be wrong."

We listened to similar statements by the delegates who took the floor before me. Those who will speak after me will probably also repeat this message. We also listened to the statement by President Bush and to the interview by Dr. Rice, and we listened to the statements made by Secretary of State Powell on the need for an immediate withdrawal.

The Secretary-General went on to say that the situation was extremely dangerous, that large numbers of Palestinian citizens were going for days at a time without medication, food and water, let alone the fact that humanitarian agencies were not allowed to take action or to salvage whatever is left to be saved. As you heard in statements reported in the press and many other statements, Switzerland has lodged a complaint that the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Palestinian Red Crescent were attacked and that ambulances were prevented from moving or transporting the wounded, while those who were wounded were left to die.

The crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories is getting worse by the minute. The occupying Power persists in its crimes of State terror against defenceless and besieged Palestinian civilians. What can be asked of the Palestinian people when they are under siege, being killed and under occupation? I think that what they have had to endure is enough. On television screens we saw the bodies of Palestinian civilians who had been killed and thrown in the streets, which recalls the scenes of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Beirut, committed at the hands of the current Israeli Prime Minister, Sharon, in 1982.

The crimes follow the same scenario now. Will the Council and the international community allow Sharon and his terrorist army to commit more massacres? Would they be left free to not comply with the Council's resolutions?

With regard to the Blue Line, Lebanon has declared — and I was informed by the Lebanese Mission of the facts — that what is taking place in southern Lebanon is confined to the Shab'a Farms. The Shab'a Farms are Lebanese territories still under Israeli occupation; Lebanon has the right to recover its occupied territories. This was endorsed at all Arab Summit meetings. The Lebanese believe that the incidents reported are the result of continued provocations by the Israelis against the sovereignty of Lebanon.

Suffice it to say that the gross violations of the Lebanese air, maritime and land space are the provocation. There have been more than 1,000 violations of Lebanese air space. Most of those

violations took place at speeds greater than the speed of sound, thereby terrorizing and intimidating Lebanese citizens. As a result, some persons had to be hospitalized due to the ensuing trauma. This afternoon, Israel used 155 millimetre guns to shell the region of Kafr Shuba, in liberated Lebanese territory where Israel is mobilizing its army.

Lebanon confirmed at the highest level that it has no intention whatever of opening up a new front. Questions relating to escalation should be addressed to the Israeli side, which, in the light of its continuous provocations and territorial, naval and aerial violations, is the party responsible for escalation. The Lebanese Government has already ordered its security forces to detain and try some of the elements operating outside the law. As I understand it, the attorney-general and the court of appeals in Lebanon have referred those elements to a military tribunal, where they will be tried and sentenced accordingly.

Addressing this question while discussing the implementation of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) is an attempt to divert the Council's attention and to sidetrack it. Let us be clear: our voices and our resolutions are in vain while the tragedy of the Palestinian people continues. The Palestinian people beseech the Council to rescue them from a campaign of genocide in which — as the representative of Palestine has already mentioned — planes and all kinds of weaponry are being used in a fashion that surpasses the actions of Nazis.

It is against this backdrop that the Arab Group submitted its request that the Council convene this meeting to take the necessary measures to call upon Israel to respect international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Council should call upon Israel to put an end to its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and its destruction of Palestinian property, as well as to end its organized terror and its defiance of international legitimacy and the resolutions of the Security Council. Israel must be called upon to withdraw immediately. The Council is called upon to dispatch a United Nations international protection force to protect the Palestinian people, who are being subjected to annihilation and the crime of genocide. Israel must also be called upon to stop its destruction of Christian and Muslim religious sites in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Everyone should be aware of the fact that the ongoing occupation is the main cause of the tragedy unfolding in the region. As we have already pointed out to the Council, this region will never enjoy security unless a just and comprehensive peace is achieved and the root causes of the problem are addressed. This should be done in accordance with the historic initiative of the Arab Summit held in Beirut, which includes provisions for the realization of peace in all its aspects.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully associates itself with the statement to be made shortly by the Ambassador of Spain on behalf of the European Union.

France spoke about the exceptional seriousness of the situation in the Middle East during the two public debates held by the Security Council during the past 10 days. In order to be succinct, I shall not go into detail about the substance of those statements. But they remain entirely current, unfortunately.

The military operations undertaken by the Israeli army against Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank are continuing and, in fact, have intensified, despite the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). As underscored by the Council in the President's statement to the press last night, the military operations have been marked by numerous violations of humanitarian law. Those operations have produced numerous civilian victims and threaten the survival of the Palestinian Authority. This is unacceptable. France appeals to both parties to fully implement resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), now and without further delay. France rejects any sequential or conditional reading of those resolutions. Israel must withdraw now from the Palestinian towns and villages that have been reoccupied. It is also essential that the Palestinian Authority make the necessary gestures to bring about a definitive cessation of terrorist attacks.

I believe that there are three points that deserve to be underscored in the present tragic circumstances. The first pertains to the humanitarian consequences of Israeli military incursions into the West Bank, which are extremely serious. It is unacceptable that medical assistance is not able to reach the injured and the Palestinian population. It is also unacceptable for consuls-general not to have access to their nationals. Israel must immediately take the necessary measures to

come into full compliance with international humanitarian law as defined in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular as regards civilian populations and foreign nationals. The right of consular access to citizens of third States must be guaranteed. Finally, through its highest authorities, France has expressed its distress about the situation around the Church of the Nativity, in Bethlehem. All Holy Sites must be fully respected, whether Christian, Jewish or Islamic.

My second point is that the actions of the Security Council must be clearly defined and coordinated with the efforts of the "quartet" in the field.

France appeals to the parties to cooperate fully with all the members of the "quartet", and in particular with the United States Secretary of State, in order to bring about an immediate joint ceasefire and an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the reoccupied Palestinian cities. It is essential that the ceasefire be coupled with the resumption without delay of negotiations on a final political settlement of the conflict. The objective of such a settlement is set out in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002): the peaceful coexistence of two independent States, Israel and Palestine, within secure and recognized borders.

Such a ceasefire will not be durable without at least two conditions: that it be accompanied by the resumption of a genuine political process, and that it be guaranteed by the international community's continued engagement with the parties. We cannot leave them to their deadly confrontation. In France's view, the deployment of international observers or monitors charged with helping the parties respect their mutual commitments has long seemed a necessity in the interests of both the Palestinians and the Israelis. That idea seems to be on track today, including on the Israeli side, judging from Ambassador Lancry's statement to the Council this morning. We must work together towards that end.

My third point is that the situation in the Palestinian territories is increasing tension in the entire region, in particular between Lebanon and Israel. France is extremely concerned by the continued exchanges of fire from both sides of the Blue Line. Today the situation is threatening to degenerate. Faced with the risk of escalation, France calls on the parties to demonstrate their sense of responsibility in a concrete way. The parties must refrain from any provocation or disproportionate reaction.

The Security Council, in its resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), has set out the path to be followed. The efforts of all must contribute to the effective implementation of those resolutions without delay. There is no military solution. Peace requires the end of confrontation and the resumption of negotiations.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): On 4 April, the Security Council adopted resolution 1403 (2002), demanding the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay. However, for three days, Israel has ignored the demands of the Council and the international community. Instead of withdrawing from the Palestinian territories, it has stepped up its military actions. That has led to a deepening of the conflict between Israel and Palestine. We are deeply concerned, and we express our regret over the situation.

The Israeli authorities have carried out military attacks against Palestinian cities and have conducted searches in a barbaric manner, in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions, including those relating to the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Such acts have also seriously violated the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and have led to a grave humanitarian situation.

The wilful acts of the Israeli authorities are an obstacle to all the efforts of the international community, including the United Nations, to stop the escalation of violence between Israel and Palestine and to promote peace in the Middle East. Such acts have also made it more difficult to realize the hope for the peaceful coexistence of Israel and Palestine. The military attacks of the Israeli authorities against the Palestinians, carried out in the name of anti-terrorism, have led to serious losses of Palestinian lives and property. Such military attacks also interfere with and undermine the international community's effort to combat terrorism.

In order to put an end to the violent conflict between Israel and Palestine and to promote the Middle East peace process, the most urgent task today is to urge Israel to implement Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), to withdraw its troops immediately and unconditionally from all Palestinian

cities, and to guarantee the safety and freedom of Chairman Arafat.

Our condemnation of Israel's military attacks and our explicit demand that Israel withdraw its troops do not mean that we accept suicide bombings. The killing of innocent civilians in Israel can only add to fuel to the fire. It cannot help the just cause of the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

The international community must take concerted action to prevent the situation in the Middle East from continuing to deteriorate. We support all international efforts aimed at easing the crisis. The leadership and the Government of China have been working hard to ease the conflict between Israel and Palestine. We will continue to conduct consultations in cooperation with all parties concerned.

Sir. Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The position of the European Union (EU) will be fully set out by the Spanish presidency later in this debate, and the United Kingdom strongly supports the statement that will be made.

First, we are very disturbed by reports from southern Lebanon and the Blue Line. The rise in tension there has to be reversed. We strongly endorse the European Union's condemnation of the recent attacks from Lebanese territory, and the United Kingdom shares the positions of our French and Irish partners on that issue.

Secondly, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I have to add to the EU's statement that the United Kingdom finds the continuing — indeed, escalating — Israeli military action following the adoption of resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) intolerable. It amounts to a defiance of the Security Council, and we condemn it. We demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from areas that are the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority. In addition, we expect Israel rigorously to respect humanitarian norms and to prevent human rights abuses. Their carelessness as regards the effects of the fighting on civilians is, prima facie, a breach of Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

On the Palestinian side, whatever the motivation, there has been an equivocation about resorting to violence and about the scope allowed for the committing of acts of terrorism. The Palestinian leadership must be unequivocal in opposing suicide bombing and then in taking action to see that these instructions are respected. Israel must, of course, allow President Arafat to do his job in this, as in other respects.

There has begun to be talk of a further draft resolution. I would advise the Council against any debasing of the currency of its resolutions. Israel's actions, while they continue, are amounting to self-condemnation. We hope they stop now, but if they do not, the effect of that disastrously counterproductive approach will be far more compelling than another version of resolutions 1397 (2002) or 1402 (2002). Let those resolutions speak for themselves and let the activity in the region of Secretary Powell and other senior representatives of the "quartet" take the operational lead in bringing this horrific episode to a close. Third-party involvement has now become absolutely essential and this could extend — as the Ambassador of France has said — to monitoring.

When the Security Council next puts effort into a new draft resolution, it should be to spell out, with clarity and unanimity, the political route out of this quagmire, without which no progress away from violence is going to be a realistic prospect.

Mr. Valdivieso (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Since 12 March, the Council has adopted three resolutions. The latest, resolution 1403 (2002), was adopted unanimously. That makes three resolutions in three weeks, in contrast to the earlier period, when 18 months elapsed with no convergence on how to register a conclusion reflecting the deterioration of a situation that has led to the deep political and humanitarian crisis we now face.

For the Council, the topic on today's agenda is as old as the United Nations itself. We have become accustomed to quoting and requoting the best-known resolutions and, unfortunately, every time we do so it is because they have not been complied with. The Council must insist yet again, however, if it is to fulfil its obligations with respect to international peace and security. It must do so at a particularly sensitive moment, when several factors have to come together if we are to work coherently to address the widespread violence, its serious impact on the civilian population, the dire need for access to humanitarian assistance, the resumption of open conflict in northern Israel across the Blue Line and the growing risk of destabilization throughout the region.

The focus of our discussion today is immediate and unconditional compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council. Colombia cannot accept or conceive of any argument in support of non-compliance with the resolutions of this organ. The basis for our statements is the clearly defined political vision in resolution 1397 (2002) and the demands in resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) for the restoration of conditions of security. Both sides have obligations to discharge without delay. The Council must do its utmost to ensure that final outcome. Thus, Israel must immediately withdraw its armed forces from the occupied cities, including Ramallah. Equally and as a consequence of the foregoing, Palestine must do everything in its power to implement a ceasefire. These are the sine qua non conditions for the restoration of security and of the viability of a political process that can be supported by the parties and the international community as a whole.

In this context, we must consider the desirability of formally establishing some type of international presence that will help the parties to maintain the validity of these resolutions. This may contribute in turn to the parallel restoration of a sufficient level of trust between the parties, which could promote political convergence.

The work of the Security Council must be part of a concerted international effort to support the efforts of other relevant actors. After many attempts, we have now achieved consensus in the adoption of our recent resolution. This unity will be meaningful, however, only if it is articulated in coordination with the activities of the other relevant international actors, the "quartet" in particular. That mechanism must therefore be allowed to operate without limitation in the field. That, of course, is and has been the wish of all of us here.

We conclude by referring to the humanitarian situation, a matter that cannot be ignored or subject to negotiation or exceptions. Regardless of the conditions prevailing in the conflict, the parties are obligated to do everything in their power to respect the physical and moral integrity of civilians affected by those conditions. In this respect, just as we unreservedly condemn attacks on the civilian population by suicidal extremists, we also demand of the Government of Israel that it adhere strictly to the standards of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention in dealing with defenceless minors, journalists, humanitarian personnel — including that of the International Committee of the Red Cross — and United Nations personnel.

Ultimately, we all understand that Israel's armed forces are seeking to protect Israeli civilians, but we must ask ourselves: Who is protecting Palestinian civilians living in the occupied territories, particularly now that the Palestinian Authority has been reduced to its smallest common denominator?

Mr. Fall (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is very pleased to participate in this open meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

The situation that is evolving in the field, regrettably, compels the Council to remain focused on that worrisome development. Despite the adoption in close succession of three resolutions calling on the parties to renounce violence, the situation has continued to deteriorate. Israel has pursued its policy of re-occupying self-governing Palestinian zones, in contempt of the relevant provisions of those resolutions.

My delegation deplores the growing number of victims among the civilian populations. In its efforts to lead both parties to renounce violence and occupation, the Council has worked strenuously to ensure the effective implementation of resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), in particular the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. It is, however, in the interests of all the parties that these recent resolutions of the Council be fully implemented.

Israel must abandon the intensification of its military campaign against Palestinian towns and the Palestinian Authority and stop defying the international community in general and the Security Council in particular. The isolation of Chairman Arafat and the ongoing siege of the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority must come to an end.

My delegation notes that, following several attempts to negotiate, several mediators have been unable to obtain an effective ceasefire or the withdrawal of Israeli troops. It would appear that the initiatives of the "quartet" must now be harmonized to arrive at a common strategy for action that can achieve a settlement to the crisis.

In that regard, my delegation welcomes next Wednesday's meeting in Madrid of the "quartet", in which Secretary-General Kofi Annan will participate.

The world today places great hope in the trip to the subregion that the United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, has just begun. Given the seriousness of the situation and the urgency of taking measures to put an end to the escalation of violence, my delegation would have wished that this visit had begun with the parties involved. We nonetheless expect much from this high-level United States initiative.

The private meetings held on 2 April and today have revealed a difference of opinion between the parties over the meaning of the three resolutions adopted recently. This reflects the realities on the ground. My delegation encourages the Council to institutionalize this practice of private meetings with the two representatives in order to continue examining the evolution of the positions of the parties and their compliance with their commitments.

Furthermore, we believe that the situation along the Blue Line is also a source of great concern. All parties must commit themselves to respecting the Blue Line and agreed provisions. No action can justify another. There can be no doubt that the risk of escalation along the Line is real.

My delegation notes with concern that if the initiatives under way do not bring about an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli troops, the humanitarian situation, which is already a cause of concern, could worsen inexorably, ultimately with even more civilian victims.

We must recognize that this situation could also bring about the full dismantling of the Palestinian Authority, and even its pure and simple destruction. For our part, we are convinced that this policy runs counter to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and international law. It deserves to be vigorously condemned, because its natural consequence is an increase in terrorism and the emergence of uncontrolled armed groups whose activities will be even more damaging to international security.

It is therefore imperative that every measure be taken for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions so that the possibility remains open of a final settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

In that connection, and in light of the statements that the Israeli and Palestinian representative made this morning during our private meetings, we feel that it is useful to suggest to the Council as well as to the co-sponsors of the peace process that they do everything they can to convince the two parties to make parallel statements in which they clearly recognize the need to implement without delay the relevant resolutions of the Council, in particular 1402 (2002).

Ms. Lee (Singapore): The Security Council is meeting once again, for the third time in just over a week, to consider the dangerous situation in the Middle East, especially in the occupied territories. We will not repeat the points made in recent debates. However, it bears reiterating that the Security Council is determined to see the full and immediate implementation of its resolutions, in particular resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). Resolution 1403 (2002) was the first resolution on the Middle East in a long time which was submitted as a presidential text and adopted unanimously by the Security Council. This clear message from a united Council must be heeded.

Many significant diplomatic initiatives have been undertaken to help implement these resolutions, including the decision by United States President George Bush to dispatch Secretary of State Powell to the region, and the momentous decision taken by the Arab leaders at the Beirut Summit. However, no amount of diplomatic initiatives, including the current debate of the Security Council, can substitute for real action on the ground, not least by the parties involved.

Yet despite the clear demands of the Security Council, we find developments moving in exactly the opposite direction. Not only have Israeli troops not been withdrawn from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; there has, in fact, been an acceleration of military incursions into occupied territories, resulting in the loss of too many civilian lives.

We heard earlier today of the alarming humanitarian situation in the occupied territories. Whilst Israel has every right to exercise self-defence, its obligations under international law are also clear. It must allow immediate medical access to the occupied areas by international humanitarian agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Both parties have found it impossible to move towards any meaningful ceasefire, and implementation of the Tenet security work plan or of the Mitchell Committee recommendations looks further away than ever. Violence, including acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, have continued unabated.

Before the adoption of resolution 1403 (2002) last week, the Secretary-General pointed out that all parties risked making serious miscalculations about the effects that their actions are going to have on each other. This includes the disquieting developments along the Blue Line. Such miscalculations would draw the region into greater and greater danger.

We stand ready to take any further action, in a united fashion, which could help facilitate the work of international mediators on the ground to halt the violence, bring an end to the suicide bombings and secure the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. It is now time for the parties to listen to the voice of reason and to act in accordance with the collective will of the international community, expressed through resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Russian Federation.

Russia is profoundly concerned at what is happening. The information provided by Under-Secretary-General Kieran Prendergast at today's briefing during Council consultations pointed to gross violations of the norms of international law in the occupied Palestinian territories, a large number of casualties among the civilian population and impediments caused by Israel to the activities of international humanitarian organizations. We have no grounds not to believe the information provided by Mr. Prendergast.

Holy sites in Palestinian territories are under threat, including the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, which for many days now has been blockaded by Israeli forces. According to information that reaches us, shooting is taking place around the church and a fire has started in neighbouring buildings.

A comprehensive settlement in the region can be achieved only through political dialogue. There can be no military solution. We strongly call upon the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to immediately implement all of the provisions of resolutions 1397 (2002) and, particularly, 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), to urgently declare a ceasefire, to immediately stop the incursion by Israeli forces into Palestinian towns and to begin the withdrawal of those forces.

It is essential to stop the destruction of the structures of the Palestinian Authority and the isolation of Chairman Arafat, who is the leader of the Palestinian people. It is precisely he who should lead Palestinian efforts to normalize the situation.

More and more, members of the international community — and we were convinced about this at today's briefing — are concluding that unless there is an international presence in the occupied territories, it will be impossible to reverse the current course of events along military lines. We think that the Security Council should be ready in the most serious manner possible urgently to consider this question. The further uncontrolled course of events would be extremely dangerous and could lead to long-term undermining of Palestinian-Israeli and Arab-Israeli relations.

A new pocket of tension is already growing around the Blue Line. Therefore, at this stage, I stress once again that it is essential to ensure the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002). The Security Council is united in this. It has called upon the parties to fully cooperate to that end with the "quartet". It will persist in seeking implementation of its decisions.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I should like to inform Council members that I have received letters from the representatives of Lebanon, Mauritania, the Republic of Korea and the United Arab Emirates in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda.

In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Diab (Lebanon), Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Mr. Sun Joun-yung (the Republic of Korea), and Mr. Al-Shamsi (the United Arab Emirates) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

Moreover, I wish to inform Council members that the Arab Group, in particular the delegation of Syria, has asked to hold consultations today to introduce the draft resolution. Since, in any case, we will have to conclude our work by 7 p.m., we will conclude this official part of the meeting at 6.30 p.m. and move to the consultations room, so that the Syrian delegation can then introduce the draft resolution. The continuation of today's discussion will be resumed tomorrow at 10.30 a.m.

We will now continue with our meeting. The next speaker on my list is the representative of Tunisia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, allow me at the outset to express to you on behalf of the Arab Group, whose chairmanship we hold for this month, our thanks and appreciation for your prompt response in convening this emergency meeting. It is being held in tragic circumstances that cause sentiments of sorrow, bewilderment and condemnation, due to the continued deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories and the Israeli Government's insistence on betting on the logic of war and weaponry rather than drawing on the logic of peace and dialogue on the basis of the United Nations resolutions, which are the foundation of the peace process.

We are dismayed by the total disregard of Sharon's Government for the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially those recently adopted by the Security Council. We are dismayed by the Israeli military machine's persistent use of brutal force in the occupied Palestinian territories, with open recklessness and disregard for the will of the international community and an open contempt for the series of appeals made by the peace-loving parties.

We have expressed our great appreciation for the international community's progress in addressing the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. That progress came in the form of the Council's adoption of resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), which call for the establishment of a Palestinian State within secure and internationally recognized borders and for the immediate Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories. We also welcomed the call made by the President of the United States, Mr. George Bush, for the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian cities that had been reoccupied, for a freeze on all settlement activities and for the withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, in conformity with resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We also welcomed with high expectations the news of the peaceful mission to the region of the United States Secretary of State, Mr. Colin Powell, for which we have high hopes.

However, the Israeli occupying Power, in flagrant defiance of all the aforementioned resolutions, has refused and persisted with adamant stubbornness in its all-out, ferocious war in the Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps, allowing itself to kill countless numbers of unarmed Palestinian civilians in flagrant violation of the norms of international law and international humanitarian law, in an unmistakable attempt to present the international community with a fait accompli, so that Israel could later disavow its obligations under the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Ambassador of the United Kingdom, Sir Jeremy Greenstock, said that what Israel is doing constitutes self-condemnation and that the Council must therefore underline and officially affirm this condemnation in its resolutions.

What is at stake today is the credibility of the Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. In these extremely tragic circumstances, we cannot stand idly by in the face of the appalling Israeli conduct, as if we were declaring the international community unable to force Israel to comply with the Security Council's resolutions and to put an end to the dangerous spiral of its practices, which constitute a clear threat to international peace and security.

Tunisia reaffirms its full solidarity with the fraternal Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership headed by President Arafat, in order to restore all the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among which is the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.

While we demand immediate implementation of Council resolutions, especially the most recent one, resolution 1403 (2002), and the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian territories, we underscore the need for mustering all efforts of the international community, especially the

major international players, such as the "quartet", in order to ensure urgent international protection for the Palestinian people and to prevent any further deterioration of the situation.

We must also stress the need for immediate and effective action to end the siege imposed on the great national fighter and leader of the Palestinian people's national march, President Arafat. All obstacles placed on the Palestinian Authority's infrastructure must be removed immediately with a view to laying the groundwork for the resumption of the peace process and the revival of the inescapable and indispensable Israeli-Palestinian negotiating track, especially in the aftermath of the Beirut Arab Summit, which made it abundantly clear that peace is the strategic option chosen by all Arab States.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): By sheer coincidence, yesterday I was watching a documentary on the resistance to occupation in European cities during the Second World War. I saw members of the resistance, who Israel today dares to call terrorists. I saw the popular armed resistance against the occupation of the cities of Warsaw, and Arnhem, in the Netherlands, and other cities and villages in Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Norway, France and elsewhere. I was indeed profoundly saddened to see this attempt to reverse the truth, falsify criteria, blatant lies and other actions that attempt to circumvent international law and marginalize the role of international will embodied in Security Council resolutions.

We all watch on television the continuing savage onslaught against Palestinian civilians, cities and towns. We all see the Palestinian people attempting to resist the occupation forces. We are confident that the outcome will be what we have witnessed throughout the course of human history: the defeat of occupation forces and the victory of the right to self-determination. However, the question that remains is, how long the world will permit victims to fall and cities and towns to be destroyed and their inhabitants to be attacked.

Israel continues its aggressive military operations against the Palestinian people, their infrastructure, churches, mosques, homes, schools and hospitals. Israel continues to refuse to implement the resolutions of this Council, 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). The Israeli Government continues to claim that it is extending its hand towards peace. However, it is actually using it hands to kill civilians. It attempts to impose hegemony and is using blind armed force, leaving the injured and the dead in the streets, preventing any assistance from reaching them and preventing their burial. In so doing, it is deepening hatred and is inciting extremism. Israel is attempting to delude the world, claiming that it raises the banner of democracy and the culture of peace. In fact, it practises an illegal policy of inhuman aggression.

Yesterday the Council issued a statement to the press, declaring its deep concern at Israel's failure to implement its resolutions. It pointed out that the continuing violence by the Power controlling events on the ground is unacceptable. We were deeply shocked once again at the Council's failure to stand firmly and resolutely against this Israeli violation of Council resolutions; this is a situation that has reached the point at which the Council is incapable of calling the occupying State, Israel, by name and refers to it in all its previous resolutions as the occupation State. Today we see the Council timidly referring in whispers to the violence of the controlling Power. The Council today is called upon to be resolute, to assume its responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of this Organization and not to allow the law of the jungle to overcome international law.

Despite the bilateral efforts by several parties of the international community and the forces that influence the international scene, the Security Council is called upon to stop the aggression, using the mechanisms available to it. It is called upon to order the immediate withdrawal from the Palestinian territories and to dispatch an international observer force to guarantee protection of the Palestinian people and to ensure that Israel will never again carry out aggression against the Palestinian territories.

Until now Israel has rejected the proposal to send an international observer force to the Palestinian territories. On our side, we fully realize the reasons behind this intransigent attitude. Israel feels that the arrival of such a force refers to textual commitments in the Tenet plan and Mitchell recommendations, which contradict its expansionist policies and its policy of glorifying occupation and maintaining the land for the

settlers at the expense of the future of the Palestinians and of international law.

The Israeli Government's practices are deepening the conflict and the hatred. They threaten the future of coexistence and cooperation in that region. My country is at the very heart of that region, and thus we hope that the Security Council will understand the role it is called on to play and that it will carry out that role with the effectiveness expected of it. Therefore, we hope that the Council will call for immediate Israeli withdrawal so that the situation can be brought under control and so there can be an end to all acts of confrontation, allowing the opportunity for calm and for the entry of international observers in an appropriate and requisite number so that the situation may be stabilized, thus allowing implementation of the understandings and recommendations that we have already mentioned. This must be followed by the return to negotiations in order to achieve settlement on the basis of international law and the resolutions, agreements and understandings of which we are all aware.

I wish to make a final comment. We emphasize this and call on the Council members to understand it, confident that they will agree with us on these particular points. We mean the following.

First, all attempts to jeopardize the personal safety of President Arafat in his capacity as the legitimate President of the Palestinian people will be broken on the solid rock of Palestinian determination to maintain its national leadership and the entire world's support of that leadership. Secondly, the acts of the Israeli Government will, unfortunately, lead to further innocent victims on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

We hope that the Council will succeed in fulfilling its responsibilities in facing the defiance and aggression of Israel.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite her to take a seat at the Council table and to make her statement.

Ms. Ndhlovu (South Africa): My delegation is pleased to see you, Sir, presiding over this emergency meeting of the Security Council, which has been called in response to Israel's ongoing refusal to implement Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). We note with great concern that the Israeli Government is using the time period between the adoption of resolution 1403 (2002) and Secretary of State Powell's visit to the region to intensify its military operations against the Palestinian Authority and the people in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem.

The Non-Aligned Movement firmly believes that Israel's attempt to isolate and humiliate President Arafat is a grave error. Whether Prime Minister Sharon likes it or not, President Arafat was democratically elected by the Palestinian people and remains their leader. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General noted during his statement to the Council on 4 April 2002, the right to self-defence is not a blank cheque.

The unprecedented adoption of three Security Council resolutions in three weeks demonstrates that the international community will not condone the continuation of massive Israeli military aggression against Palestinian towns and cities.

Israel has no jurisdiction over diplomatic representatives, humanitarian workers and journalists, and no right to refuse them access to Palestinian towns and cities. We cannot accept the Israeli Government's dictating to those representatives of the international community accredited to Palestine when they may or may not function. South Africa's Chargé d'affaires in Palestine is among those barred from Ramallah by the Israeli Defence Force, which has declared the city a closed military zone.

Israel's military operations in Palestinian towns and cities have generated a humanitarian and human rights catastrophe throughout the occupied territory, including Jerusalem. According to the Israeli Government's own estimates, hundreds of Palestinian civilians have been killed and many more wounded. We note with deep concern that the Israeli Defence Force continues to deny Red Cross, Red Crescent and other medical and humanitarian workers access to wounded or dead civilians.

We wish to remind the Security Council that three suggested courses of action have been proposed to it by the Non-Aligned Movement, and that it has yet to take them up. The first is that the Council should consider the immediate deployment of a credible, multinational monitoring mechanism or peacekeeping force to ensure that the parties observe a ceasefire and any other agreements that may be reached between them. The

second is that the Council consider sending a mission to Israel and Palestine immediately to obtain a first-hand impression of events on the ground. The third is that the Council consider the suggestion that it meet with Prime Minister Sharon and President Arafat to obtain a first-hand account of the situation on the ground.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its demand that Israel immediately implement Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) and respect human rights and international humanitarian law and allow medical and humanitarian workers, journalists and international diplomatic representatives free access to Palestinian towns and cities. We call on Israel to immediately withdraw its forces and to acknowledge that a political, rather than a military, solution needs to be found to the crisis that Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian land has provoked in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Kuwait. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me, at the beginning of my statement, to express to you, Mr. President, our thanks for your efforts in addressing the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, which is continuing to deteriorate in a serious manner. This is a result of the Israeli Government's persistence in defying and violating Security Council resolutions and all of the principles of international law. Israel is thus demonstrating a will for war and a thirst for blood. It is under the illusion that brute force is the only means of achieving peace and security for Israel.

Kuwait calls upon the Security Council to take the necessary measures, as is incumbent upon it under the United Nations Charter and international law, to pressure Israel to put an end to genocide and the barbarous massacre of the Palestinian people. Kuwait has paid close attention to the position of the international community since the beginning of this crisis, and we have not heard any valid argument to counter the opinion of the Arab countries regarding the core of the tragic struggle and the crisis we are experiencing or of its cause, which is well known: the continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories. Furthermore, Israel is persisting in activities involving genocide and oppression, as well as failing to implement relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolutions 1397 (2002), 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002).

The fact that this meeting is being held is consistent with the role and responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter. We do not agree with those who say that such meetings are not useful. On the contrary, we think this is part and parcel of the Council's mandated responsibility vis-à-vis international peace and security when they are threatened. Media reports indicate that the situation today is extremely grave; they illustrate the determined and wilful killing of defenceless Palestinians and the destruction of their infrastructure.

Kuwait adheres to national and international humanitarian principles. Through a declaration of its Council of Ministers on 7 April, it requested the international community immediately to intervene to stop the genocide being perpetrated by Israeli forces against the Palestinian people. Kuwait has also called for a lifting of the siege of the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians and for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Arab territories.

In the statement to the press issued yesterday by its President, the Security Council said that it was disturbed by the policy of the occupying forces to continue to defy Security Council resolutions. Consequently, we call upon the Council to set that position out in a new resolution calling upon Israel to respect the rules of international humanitarian law, proposing the deployment of an international observation force to restore stability to the region, ensuring Israel's implementation of all relevant resolutions and assisting the parties to implement the agreements to which they have subscribed.

Kuwait would like to commend the United States for its initiative to request Israel to withdraw and to cease its military activities in Palestinian territories. It should be pointed out that the United States Government, which is one of the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, should exert pressure on Israel with a view to ensuring that vital United States interests are protected vis-à-vis Arab countries. The United States can play that role because it is also a member of the Security Council, which presupposes greater legal responsibility for the observance of international law. It is because the United States is

aware of the will and resolve of the international community and of the Council that it is in a position to exert pressure against Israel.

Finally, we would like to thank the international "quartet" — the Russian Federation, the European Union, the United States and the United Nations — for its efforts at compelling the Government of Israel to comply with the international community's demands. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, who took a very bold position in his statement before the Council prior to the adoption of resolution 1403 (2002). Indeed, the Secretary-General has reminded the Government of Israel that self-defence is not a blank cheque for it to spill blood and occupy territory in a manner inconsistent with the principles of international law. We also welcome the statement made by the Secretary-General today.

Kuwait believes that, through its mandate, the Security Council implements the will of the international community. It is for that reason that we call upon the Council to put an end to this crisis as quickly as possible by utilizing the tools and powers it enjoys under the Charter.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Qatar. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like, on behalf of Qatar, Chairman of the Ninth Islamic Summit, to extend my warmest thanks to you, Mr. President, for the interest you have shown and for responding so quickly to the call to hold this urgent meeting to consider the unprecedented aggression against the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The Council should have been meeting again to assess what had been accomplished within the framework of the recently adopted resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). But on the contrary, it is meeting today to seek redress in the light of unanimously adopted Security Council resolutions that we want to see Israel respect. It is extremely regrettable that the resolutions of this legitimate body continue to be held hostage. It is inconceivable that the important and decisive resolutions that have been adopted by the Security Council — a body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security — are not being implemented. But that has been the usual outcome when the Council is dealing with the Palestinian question: to date, Israel has continued to defy and flout all resolutions.

The practices of the occupying forces — in particular those in Nablus and Jenin — are the epitome of State terrorism. This barbarity has broken out at a time when we thought that the situation was about to improve. The escalation has continued, and all members of the Council are familiar with the nature of the crimes. I would only mention the deaths, yesterday and today, of about 100 Palestinian martyrs in the refugee camps. Palestinian cities are littered with the wounded and the dead. The occupying forces have not even permitted Red Cross and Red Crescent ambulances to reach victims, which is a grave violation of all norms of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention.

What is most strange is that some persist in trying to establish a link between the most recent Israeli escalation and what they call "suicide operations". I would ask how valid such a link would be. Since the adoption of the most recent resolution, 1403 (2002), the escalation has been continued by one side, and it is no longer valid to condemn both parties together. The occupying forces, who continue to defy the most recent Security Council resolutions, must be condemned.

On behalf of my country's delegation, I reiterate that the Council is responsible for deterring Israel from its aggression towards the Palestinian people, which has now become unbridled. This is an ethical, moral and legal responsibility, to halt the massacres carried out by the Israeli occupying force against defenceless Palestinian civilians. The Council must undertake strict measures in order to apply its relevant resolutions immediately. In so doing, it would preserve its credibility and fulfil the expectations of the international community with regard to its responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Bahrain, whom I invite to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is very pleased to see your country preside over the Security Council this month, Sir, in particular when a person of your stature, long experience and expertise is presiding. At the same time, we highly

appreciate the work of your predecessor, Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby, the Permanent Representative of Norway, for his efficient conduct of the Council's work last month.

It seems that since the current Israeli Government rose to power, it has carried out a well-considered and specific programme to eliminate the legitimate Palestinian Authority and to occupy the territories under its control, while constantly denying that. However, there is much clear evidence to the contrary: many new settlements have been constructed, requiring the confiscation of new land in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In addition, the head of the Israeli Government announced that Israel needed a million more Jewish immigrants. That million, of course, requires the building of new settlements.

The Palestinian territories have been crowded by Israeli settlements over the terms of successive Israeli Governments, particularly since the current Government introduced its slogan of power and suppression to surpass previous Governments in confiscating Palestinian territories to suppress and humiliate the Palestinian people by erecting roadblocks and cutting off roads, water and electricity. For example, during Ramadan, when Muslims observe their fast, a Palestinian said to a television broadcaster that he leaves for home at 4.30 p.m. but does not arrive there until 10.30 p.m. — five hours after the end of the fasting day — because of roadblocks erected by the Israeli army.

In order for the Israeli Government to begin the implementation of its programme of usurpation and destruction, it had to create a crisis. The head of the Government visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque, setting off protests that started the second intifada with all its destructive consequences. It has escalated to a point unprecedented since the beginning of the Palestinian cause in 1948.

Israel's excessive use of military force, employing a large number of tanks, evokes scenes from both world wars. We saw tanks crush automobiles and prevent ambulances from reaching the injured, transforming Palestine's cities and villages into battlefields. All that is clear evidence of the current Israeli Government's plan, which relies on the achievement of its expansionist policies by force.

We wish to state things as they really are. After 11 September, the Israeli Government deliberately created confusion and misunderstanding with regard to the concept of terrorism. Everyone condemns terrorism and terrorist acts, but everyone also condemns occupation and asks for its end. The Palestinian territories, and part of the Syrian and Lebanese territories, are under occupation. Resistance to the Israeli occupation is internationally recognized as legitimate. No matter how much the Israeli authority tries to confuse the issues and obscure the difference between resistance to occupation and fighting terrorism, it will not succeed. Things are clear, except in the minds of Israeli officials, who are adamant and intransigent.

Resolution 1397 (2002) sets out clearly the idea of two States, Palestinian and Israeli, existing side by side. Before the current Israeli Government's rise to power, the Palestinian State had all the basic qualities of a State, in terms of infrastructure and democratic institutions. Then, suddenly, Israel started destroying that State's infrastructure, besieging its elected President, as if it were saying to the Security Council and the world's leaders that they had the right to think or dream whatever they wanted, but that it would bring about, on the ground, a fait accompli that would benefit not two States, but only one — Israel.

Having unified the capital of Jerusalem by force for its own benefit, Israel wants to unify the entire territory by force for its own benefit as well. It sees no problem in making the Palestinians refugees in their own country, and does not object to their leaving Israel to live in neighbouring Arab countries, as some Israeli extremists are advocating.

There is clear evidence that the world is going in one direction and Israel is going in the opposite one. Where are we in relation to the numerous peaceful initiatives, the last of which was the initiative of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, adopted by all Arab countries? All those initiatives rely on the principle of land for peace. Regrettably, however, Israel pays no attention to that, having said that both the Palestinians and the Arabs want to throw Israel into the sea and therefore do not want to recognize Israel.

The Arabs are now offering a just peace based on the concept of two States, as referred to in resolution 1397 (2002). Nevertheless, Israel — or at least its current Government and its head in particular — has demonstrated no willingness to act accordingly since

the drive for peace began in earnest. Sharon simply seeks both to keep the land and to achieve peace by force.

It has been rare in the history of the Security Council for two resolutions to be adopted on the same issue within such a brief period of time, as was the case with resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002). However, we have yet to see Israel implement those resolutions. We consider the Security Council to be the organ best suited to maintaining international peace and security, but when it adopts consecutive resolutions requiring a United Nations member, Israel, to abide by its will, and when that member pays no heed to those resolutions, we believe that it is the Council's duty to enforce the implementation of its resolutions by taking practical measures, as it has done with regard to many hotbeds of tension throughout the world. At the very least, it must dispatch an international observer force to come between the Palestinians and the Israelis, a step similar to those taken by the Council in other conflict areas elsewhere. We believe that the time has come for the Council to take such practical steps to address the situation in the Middle East.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank the representative of Bahrain for his kind words addressed to me.

I call on the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine): A while ago, we listened to the statement made by the Israeli representative, which was indeed an absurd and unfortunate one. The statement basically amounted to an attack on President Yasser Arafat and contained silly, stupid and unsubstantiated allegations that cannot be believed.

Let me make it very clear that the Palestinian people resent and utterly reject those attacks on our President, not only because such an Israeli position reflects the usual arrogance and condescending attitude, and not only because of the fact that the Palestinian leadership is Palestinian business, and not only because of the fact that this is an attack on a democratically elected President of ours and the symbol of the Palestinian national struggle — a man who, indeed, has greatly contributed to the cause of peace and is being attacked by a man who is basically associated with the massacres in Sabra and Shatilah. We do so not because of all these things alone, but also because the reality of the matter is that an attack on President Arafat is in fact an attack on any serious potential for reaching a political settlement. Mr. Sharon wants to get rid of President Arafat precisely because he does not want to reach a political settlement, and not vice versa. Anyone can see that very easily.

We listened to the representative of Israel talk about documents, intelligence, weapons, signatures, salaries and Al-Aqsa — a James Bond story definitely not befitting this Council. Let me just very briefly refer to the fact that, at least from what I saw on television, no rocket-propelled grenades were found; no katyushas were found; and definitely no howitzers were found. This is proof, actually, of Israeli lying all along about Palestinian smuggling of weapons. Palestinian youth in Nablus and in Jenin have only their flesh and the only available weapons are their rifles. That is the only thing we saw on television. By the way, if anyone can buy the idea of a factory for heavy armaments that cost $100,000, frankly, all of us could perhaps become rich somehow in that industry.

Let me come to the important statement by Prime Minister Sharon to which the representative of Israel referred. Let me, if I may, very quickly read out some quotations, as they appear on Reuters:

> "These missions have not yet been completed and the army will continue to operate as fast as possible until the mission is completed, until they dismantle the terrorist infrastructure of Arafat and until they catch the murderers who are holed up in various places, including the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem."

This is the beginning of how positive and how important this additional mad statement is.

> "After the army finishes its mission, it will withdraw on the order of the Government to defined security areas."

"Defined security areas". This is, of course, a new concept that Mr. Sharon is now telling the whole world he will implement. Mr. Sharon went on to say that he had promised Mr. Bush that:

> "We are making every effort to accelerate our military moves and to withdraw our forces from the places where our operations have ended."

"Where our operations have ended". This will create a whole new process of negotiating the withdrawal of the

Israeli forces from the Palestinian cities and towns. The Prime Minister goes on to say:

> "The gangs of murderers have a leader and an aim. The aim is to force us out of here, to throw us out of every place, from the home in Elon Moreh or the supermarket in Jerusalem."

I wonder if there can be more incitement or a more powerful call to hatred than that. Elon Moreh, by the way, is a settlement. Definitely, this gentleman is not a believer in any kind of political settlement, at least not one which would require ending the Israeli occupation and creating a Palestinian State.

Of the Saudi initiative, the Prime Minister says,

> "Despite the extremist demands which were included in the decisions of the Arab Summit in Beirut, I welcome the fact that such an important Arab leader as Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has for the first time recognized the right of Israel to live within secure and recognized borders."

That is a lie, as usual, and an attempt to use things to his advantage, while maintaining his basic rejectionist position. To my knowledge, Crown Prince Abdullah has not yet recognized the right of Israel to live within secure and recognized borders. What he and the Summit did was an expression of sincere readiness to do so and to establish a normal relationship with Israel, provided that Israel accepts a complete withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967. That definitely could not be described as an extremist demand.

The Prime Minister goes on to speak about what he is going to do when Secretary Powell arrives and about his intention to advance "the initiative I am presenting here today for a meeting of regional leaders which will jumpstart the steps of dialogue for a framework of peace in the Middle East": another gimmick. The Palestinians are not the party now; they are actually the problem, since Arafat is a man with whom we cannot deal. So, now we have to deal directly with the Arab leaders: another attempt to play further games without any acceptance of the necessity of "concessions" from the Israeli side. That is the important and positive statement referred to by the Israeli representative today.

Finally, I, of course, noted that a reference was made to a draft resolution, and a comment on the advisability of such a text. I definitely see the logic. Nevertheless, the central aim of the draft resolution which the Council will be considering is to deal with the appalling humanitarian crisis which exists on the ground and with the need for the Council to deal with it, in addition to at least the initial acceptance of the idea of an international presence, which, I think, many members of the Council said would be of great help. And in the meantime, of course, there is no escape from dealing with the fact that Security Council resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002) have not been implemented.

Many speakers have made very important proposals in the past. The representative of Mauritius, for instance, made an important proposal today. The representative of South Africa repeated proposals that are also important. We hope that the Council will be in a position to consider those proposals.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): The representative of Israel has asked for the floor, and I call on him.

Mr. Jacob (Israel): I regret the tone and the content of the statement just made by the Palestinian Observer. In view of the fact that his statement was well prepared, I particularly regret the use of terms such as "silly" and "stupid". I believe that we should conduct the business of this important body in a parliamentary manner. The terms he used are not in line with the parliamentary manner.

My delegation reserves the right to make an additional intervention tomorrow in response to some of the allegations raised by the Palestinian Observer.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I propose now to suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 6.50 p.m.